

## Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 084795 TOSEC 030189

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-STADIS, EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MNUC, NATO, NPG

SUBJECT: ENHANCED RADIATION: CONTENT OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT  
FROM GELB WITH POSTSCRIPT FROM CHRISTOPHER

1. IN VIEW OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S CONSULTATIONS WITH  
GENSCHER, SCHMIDT, AND OWEN, AND THE WAY THE ERW STORY  
IS BEGINNING TO DEVELOP IN THE PRESS, I THOUGHT IT WOULD  
BE USEFUL TO REVIEW PRIVATELY WITH YOU THE SUBSTANCE  
OF THE PLANNED PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE ERW DECISION.  
IT APPEARS HERE THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT COULD OCCASION AN  
OUTBURST OF CRITICISM OF THE STYLE AND COMPETENCE OF  
THE ADMINISTRATION, ITS ABILITY TO ENUNCIATE AND FOLLOW  
A CONSISTENT COURSE, AND ITS APPROACH TO EUROPEAN SECURITY,  
EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND ARMS CONTROL, WITH OPPONENTS  
CITING THE ALLEGED PARALLEL TO THE B-1 DECISION AND  
CHARGING UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT.

2. WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING INDICATIONS OF THE PROBLEM:

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-- THE FRG CLEARLY WANTS TO ENSURE, FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL  
REASONS AT A MINIMUM, THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT A NEGATIVE  
DECISION WAS NOT MADE BECAUSE OF FRG RELUCTANCE, OR  
HESITATION IN THE NATO ALLIANCE, AND THAT, ON THE CON-  
TRARY, THEY WERE PREPARED TO GO AHEAD. THEY WILL  
PROBABLY HAVE TO MAKE THIS POINT FAIRLY STRONGLY, IN

EFFECT DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES AND THE ALLIANCE FROM

THE US DECISION. VON STADEN HAS, SUBSEQUENT TO THE SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER MEETINGS, TOLD US HE SEES THIS ISSUE AS MOST SERIOUS US-FRG ISSUE HE HAS SEEN IN TEN YEARS IN WASHINGTON.

-- OWEN IS CONVINCED THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANNOUNCING A NEGATIVE DECISION WILL BE DISASTROUS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CREDIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE WEST.

-- THE PRESS KNOWS THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS IMMINENT, AND THAT THE EARLIER CONSULTATIONS AT NATO WERE CANCELLED SUDDENLY. THE NEW YORK TIMES MARCH 29 RAN AN EDITORIAL STRONGLY FAVORABLE TO A POSITIVE ERW DECISION. THE WASHINGTON POST MARCH 31 HAD AN EVANS AND NOVAK PIECE, CRITICIZING THE ADMINISTRATION FOR HAVING ALLOWED THE ISSUE TO DRAG ON SO LONG THROUGH SO MUCH CONTROVERSY, BUT ASSUMING THAT WE WOULD ULTIMATELY COME OUT WITH A POSITIVE DECISION. TIMES APRIL 1 HAS A FLORA LEWIS PIECE FROM BRUSSELS, EXPRESSING DISMAY AMONG ALLIES AT THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP OF THE US ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES, BUT ALSO ASSUMING AN EVENTUAL POSITIVE DECISION.

-- I WOULD ESTIMATE THAT HAWKS ON THE HILL WILL DELIGHT IN CRITICIZING THE ADMINISTRATION FOR A NEGATIVE DECISION,  
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PARTICULARLY ONE WHICH DOES NOT PURPORT TO SEEK ANY COMPENSATING RESPONSE FROM THE USSR. ALSO, GENERAL HAIG HAS BEEN WAY OUT ON THE POINT ON ERW, AND HIS REACTION IS CERTAIN TO BE VERY CRITICAL.

3. GIVEN THESE CONSIDERATIONS, I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD RAISE WITH THE PRESIDENT NOT THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS DECISION, BUT THE SHAPING OF WHAT HE IS PREPARED TO ANNOUNCE AT THIS POINT. IN THIS REGARD, THE UK SUGGESTION THAT THE DECISION NOT BE MADE TO APPEAR UNILATERAL AND IRREVOCABLE NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED MOST CAREFULLY. THIS RELATES TO THE B-1 PROBLEM, A POINT WHICH SCHMIDT ALSO MADE SHAPRLY TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY. WHILE THERE ARE STRONG REASONS FOR NOT ESTABLISHING A LINKAGE WITH SALT, THE CTB OR MBFR, I BELIEVE THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE DECISION BE PRESENTED AS A "CONDITIONAL NEGATIVE", I.E. THAT THE US IS EXERCISING RESTRAINT IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THE SOVIETS WILL TAKE CONCRETE STEPS OF THEIR OWN TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY SITUATION IN EUROPE, AND THAT SHOULD THOSE EXPECTATIONS NOT MATERIALIZE, THE US COULD DECIDE TO GO AHEAD WITH ERW PRODUCTION. THIS FORMULATION, WHICH YOU HAD EARLIER DISCUSSED WITH THE

PRESIDENT, WOULD SERVE TWO PURPOSES: (1) TO KEEP OPEN

SOME POSSIBILITY THAT ERW MIGHT BE PRODUCED IN THE FUTURE, AND THAT WE WERE NOT IRREVOCABLY WRITING OFF A MILITARY PROGRAM OF POTENTIAL ADVANTAGE; AND (2) BY TYING THE DECISION TO SOME SOVIET MOVEMENT, WOULD MITIGATE THE ARGUMENT OF THOSE WHO WOULD SEE A STRAIGHT NEGATIVE DECISION AS EQUIVALENT TO THE B-1 UNILATERAL DECISION, FOR WHICH AS SCHMIDT NOTED WE OBTAINED NOTHING IN RETURN.

4. IN ADDITION, BECAUSE OF MY CONVICTION THAT THE CONGRESSIONAL REACTION WILL BE HEATED, I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD CONSULT PERSONALLY WITH SOME OF THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP BEFORE MAKING HIS FINAL  
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DECISION ON THE CONTENT OF THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON ERW.

POSTSCRIPT FROM WARREN CHRISTOPHER:

I AM AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMISSION OF GELB'S MESSAGE BECAUSE YOU ARE ENTITLED TO HAVE HIS VIEWS. WHILE I HAVE JUST COME IN FROM THE AIRPORT (6:30 P.M.) AND AM NOT YET FULLY READ IN, I HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT HIS "CONDITIONAL NEGATIVE" APPROACH. IT WOULD PROLONG THE ISSUE, AND CRITICS WOULD BE PRESSING US FOR MONTHS OR YEARS TO PRODUCE THE ERW BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT DONE "ENOUGH". OBVIOUSLY, THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED WITH THE GREATEST CARE, BUT MY REACTION AT THE MOMENT IS TO GET THE MATTER BEHIND US. CHRISTOPHER

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